

540 [The immigration of Mr. Ruppasamy Muthiyagaloo to South Africa]

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INTRODUCTION

In considering the presence of Indians in South Africa as a whole many aspects have to be examined. Firstly the Indian Government did not view Natal's interest in Indian Labour as a means of removing a burden. Neither did India allow the immigration system to be forced onto the Indians. It was optional. The Indian Government very carefully set out the contract which was intended for temporary residence in Natal, after which the immigrants were to return to India. It was the Natal Government which directly and indirectly forced the Indians into permanent residence in the colony.

When Indian immigration was reintroduced in 1874 a new qualification was added to the terms of the contract. The Indian labourer had to serve five years in stead of three and was not allowed to return to India until he had decided in the colony for ten years, despite the fact that after five years he could be a free man. Instead of returning to India after his term of indenture had expired my grandfather chose to remain in South Africa and till the soil.

Therefore Indian labour contributed to the growing prosperity of the colony.

Sir Liege Hulett, Natal's Sugar Magnate in his tribute to Indians stated that "The condition of the colony before the Importation of Indian labour was one of gloom; it was one that then and there threatened to extinguish the vitality of the country, and it was only by the government assisting the importation of labour that the country began to thrive at once. Durban was absolutely built up on the Indian population".

In spite of the growing prosperity of the Colony Harry Escombe the one time Natal premier: claimed that the Indians had been brought to Natal for the purpose of supplying labour which is necessary for the development of local industries and enterprises and they are not to form a part and parcel of the South African Nation. He added that if the Indians came with the intention of working and not making South Africa their home then the wishes of the Colony will be granted in that the Indians are to come here appreciated as labourers but not welcomed as settlers and competitors.

Place of Origin in India

The Late Mr. kuppasamy Muthiyaloo was born in India in the village known as North Arcot in Amboor.

Arcot is a huge village in India which is divided into north and South. It was from these two districts that most of the underprivileged Indians came from. Struck with poverty and living in a crowded world my greatgrandfather came to South Africa together with his son and his daughter.

Socio-economic background

According to Hilda Kuper, Odda is "a migratory cast of earthworkers". This was the caste my grandfather belonged to in India. Bhattacharya maintains that Odda also called Waddava are an agricultural caste. He goes on to say that the Odda (r)s are an aboriginal race who serve as agricultural labourers and navvies.

Table indicating Caste Distribution on Congella VI

CASTE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	%
Paraiyan	65	27	92	23,5
Vanniyar	60	23	83	21,1
Vellalar	24	10	34	8,7
Odda	15	12	27	6,9
Edaya	8	5	13	3,3
Kavarai	12	2	14	3,6
Reddi	10	3	13	3,3
Baliya	7	3	10	2,6
Muslim	8	-	8	2,0
Christian	3	4	7	1,8
Pttr	3	3	6	1,5
Chetti	3	-	3	0,8
Chakkiliyan	3	-	3	0,8
Mala	1	1	2	0,5
Naik	1	1	2	0,5
Others			<u>75</u>	
			392	

Reasons for leaving Original Country

Many of the immigration Officers in trying to secure a steady flow of Labour to Natal virtually wooed Indians into coming to South Africa. As a result of the high rate of illiterate men and women in India many of them fell into the trap of these immigration officers.

The Indians were promised better working and living conditions as well as a steady income which will help to secure themselves fairly well in the land of gold. These Indians were told that wherever they walk they will find pieces of gold which will help them prosper rapidly.

My great-grandfather being illiterate grabbed at the opportunity of securing a happy future. The conditions under which he lived were appalling therefore they needed to venture out and find better opportunities. My grandfather was only eight years old at the time therefore he could not have made a decision to come on his own.

Dates of Departure and Arrival to Southern Africa

The Ship Congella VI which carried my grandfather left India on 29 July 1890 and arrived in South Africa on 18 August 1890.

The total number of "Souls Landed" as per official records indicate 392 and 16 "Native Deck" Passengers.

Owing to the outbreak of a disease a total of nine deaths had occurred. There was one birth during the voyage as well.

Name of Ship and Port of Entry

The ship Congella the VI arrived at the Port in Durban after a twenty day voyage. Many of the passengers on board the ship had suffered severe diseases and many deaths were recorded as well.

The number of immigrants on board as per Protectors Report was as follows:

Men	241	Women	79	
Boys	20	Girls	20	
Male Infants	21	Female Infants	<u>19</u>	
	<u>282 +</u>		118	= 400

Age Distribution of Passengers : Males and Females - SS Congella VI.

AGE	NO.	%
0 - 5	51	13
6 -10	23	5.8
11 -15	8	2
16 -19	52	13.2
20 -30	223	57
31 -40	30	7.6
40 -50	4	1
TOTAL	391	

The vast majority of the immigrants were between the ages twenty and thirty years. The reason for this is that they are the most productive group. They were said to be the most able bodied and most energetic. It must be noted that the smallest number of immigrants belonged to the age group forty to fifty years. Aged immigrants were obviously not encouraged because it did not correspond with the intention of importing indentured labour in the first instance. It is interesting to note that children between 0 - five years almost equalled the number of teenagers.



Indentured Indians are shown working in the cane fields. Instead of the stipulated nine hours, they were made to work eleven.

First Place of Settlement

Natal

First Occupation and Settlement

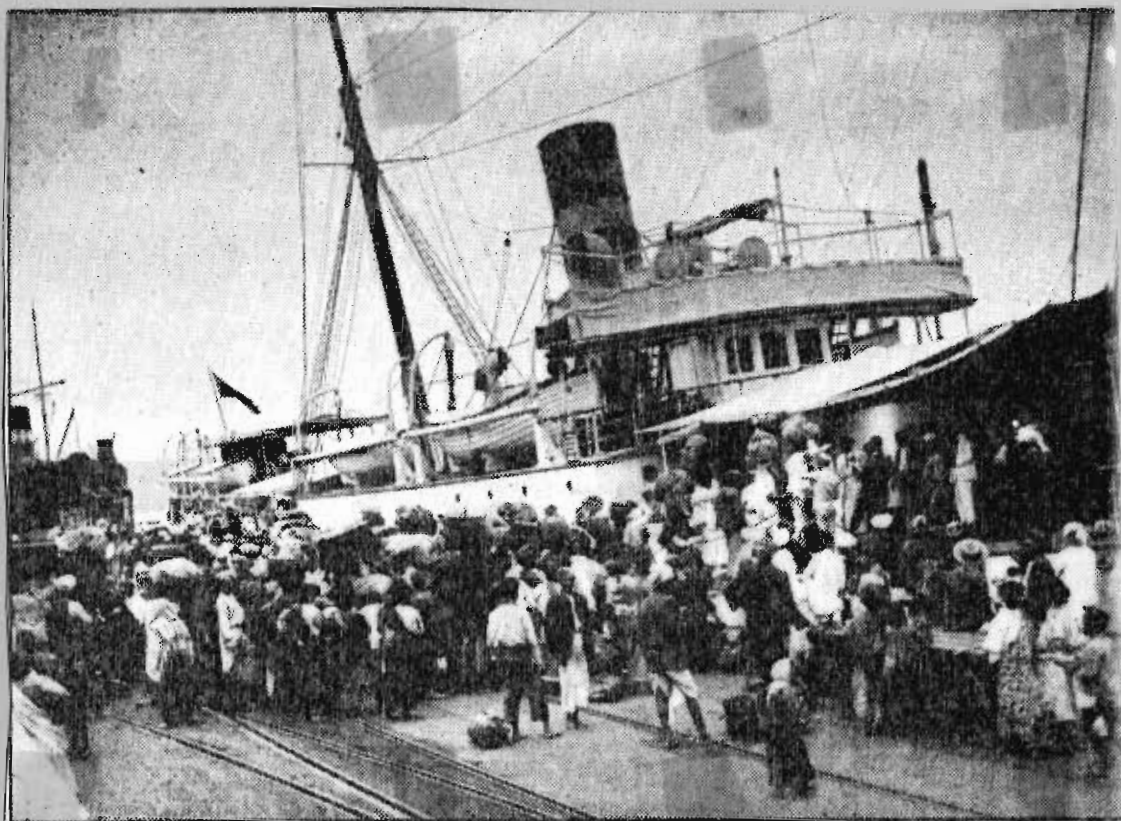
When my grandfather came to South Africa he was only eight years old therefore he could not have been assigned to anyone at that time. As he grew older, at the age of fifteen according to information given to me by my father he worked as a waiter in a Hotel called Metropol In Smith Street in Durban. My father recalled that his father kept mentioning the fact that he was a waiter and enjoyed his job. The Hotel is no longer in existence.

Subsequent Places of Settlements and Occupations,

At the age of 24 he was assigned to worked at the Natal Central Sugar Company in Mount Edgecombe near were he lived. He worked at the sugar estates until a few years before he died.

Robert F. Osborne in "Valiant Harvaest" states that the majority of the cane growers who worked on the Mout Edgecombe Estates spent the best part of their lives on the Estates and ended up leaving their acres they had toiled in and the homes they had lived in for years to the bank or to the trustee. He goes on to say that this was not any fault of their own but because of the fact that those that worked there showed records of honesty and hard labour. The secret of their nonsuccess was due to the fact that they had to combine themselves with the cultivator and manufacturer thus receiving nothing for themselves. From leaving work at the Natal Central Sugar company my grandfather became a pedlar selling fruit and vegetables. He did not achieve success because of the many unforetold circumstances that surrounded him.

He eventually managed to secure a job at a laundry known as Marasha laundry. He worked hard at the laundry together with his sons. He worked in the laundry until his death in 1952. He died as a result of a burst appendix at the age of 75.



After 10 years of service, some Indians, taking advantage of the free passage, returned home when they lodged complaints of poor conditions and enslavement in the Natal cane fields.

Marriage, birth of children etc.

My grandfather married at a early age and had five sons and three daughters.

Names of Sons

1. G. Poonsamy
2. C.M. Chetty
3. Arumugan Chetty
4. Muthal Chetty
5. Palany Chetty

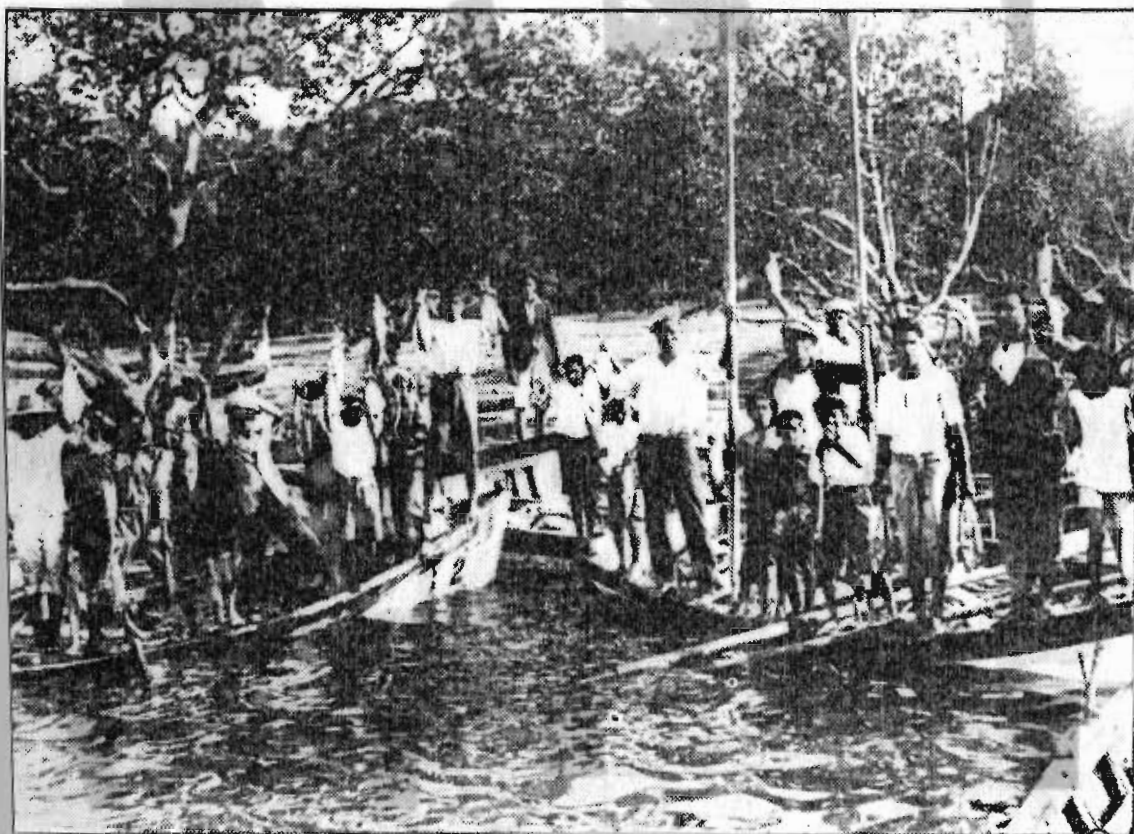
Names of Daughters

1. Nagammah Chetty
2. Chinnagamah Chetty
3. Lingammah Chetty

Social religious and Political activities

He did not participate in politics and he was not involved in any social activities but he is reported to be a devout Hindu. He was a strong follow er of Lord Krishna and was very rigid in his religious duties..He also made certain that his children did the same.

Indentured labourers on becoming free, began market gardening, hawking or fishing. Indians are born fishermen and took to this occupation with great enthusiasm.



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Calcutta, S. Dey, 1968
3. Calpin; G.H. : Indians in South Africa. Published in Pmb. Second Edition.
4. Osborne R.F. : Valiant Harvest ; H.D.A. The founding of South African Sugar Industry 1848 to 1926
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NATAL.

Certificate of Discharge.

SCHEDULE H. (SECTION 103.)

No. 43228

1906

I HEREBY CERTIFY that

Indian Immigrant No. 43228 has duly completed his term of indenture of five years in terms of Indian Immigration Law No. 25, 1891, and is released from his obligation to perform further service in this Colony under indenture.

DESCRIPTION

Father's Name

Muthialgaden

Age

24

Height

5

Feet

Inches.

Bodily Marks

None present

Date of Arrival in Colony

18-8-1898

Ship

Campbell

Last Employer

N. S. S. S.

OFFICE OF THE PROTECTOR OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS,

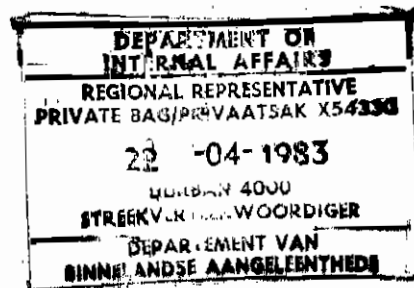
DURBAN, NATAL.

Protector of Indian Immigrants.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRSCOPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	:	<u>212</u>
Colonial Number	:	<u>43228</u>
Date of Arrival	:	<u>18-08-1890</u>
Name of Ship	:	<u>CONGELLA VI</u>
Place of Registration	:	<u> </u>
Date of Registration	:	<u> </u>
Number in Register	:	<u> </u>
Name	:	<u>KUPPUSAMI</u>
Father's Name	:	<u>MUTHIYALOO</u>
Age	:	<u>8 YEARS</u>
Sex	:	<u>MALE</u>
Caste	:	<u>ADDU</u>
District	:	<u>HAWOT</u>
Thanna/Taluq	:	<u>ARCOT</u>
Village	:	<u>AMBOON</u>
Height	:	<u> </u>
Bodily Marks	:	<u> </u>
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	<u> </u>
Relations Accompanied	:	<u> </u>
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	<u>VACCINATED</u>
Remarks	:	<u> </u>
ENDORSE	:	<u>NATAL CENTRAL SUGAR CO</u>

Certified a true copy.



[Signature]
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE